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## Judiciary Committee

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### HB 1159

**Title:** An act relating to increasing the number of superior court judges in Whatcom county.

**Brief Description:** Increasing the number of superior court judges in Whatcom county.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Lytton, Buys, Morris and Ryu; by request of Board For Judicial Administration.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Brief Summary of Bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increases the number of statutorily authorized superior court judges in Whatcom County from three to four.</li></ul>
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**Hearing Date:** 1/29/13

**Staff:** Omeara Harrington (786-7136).

**Background:**

The number of superior court judges in each county is set by statute. Any change in the number of full- and part-time judges in a county's superior court is determined by the Legislature after receiving a recommendation from the Board for Judicial Administration (BJA). The BJA's recommendation is based on an objective workload analysis developed annually by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The objective workload analysis takes into account available judicial resources and the caseload activity of the court.

The state and the county share the cost of superior court judges. In order for an additional judicial position to become effective, the legislative authority of the affected county must approve the position and agree to pay, out of county funds and without reimbursement from the state, expenses associated with the new position.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Whatcom County has three elected superior court judges. According to the AOC's objective workload analysis, an increase in the number of superior court judges in Whatcom County is recommended.

**Summary of Bill:**

The number of statutorily authorized superior court judges in Whatcom County is increased from three to four. This new position becomes effective only if the legislative authority of Whatcom County approves the position and agrees that the county will pay its share of the cost of the position without reimbursement from the state.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.